



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Michael P. Nolin
Commissioner

January 10, 2006

The Honorable David L. Babson Jr., Chairman
House Environment and Agriculture Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 303
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 1265, An act establishing the council on the relationship between public health and the environment

Dear Chairman Babson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) in support of HB 1265, which seeks to establish a council on the relationship between public health and the environment.

DES has long recognized that environmental hazards can have a major impact on public health and the quality of life in New Hampshire, and has always worked diligently to reduce exposure to environmental risks in the state. In fact, DES' mission statement lists "*protecting public health*" as one of our prime responsibilities. Over the past decade the department has been challenged with addressing more and more public health issues that demand our attention, requiring us to set priorities and work collaboratively with others in order to efficiently and effectively tackle the issues of greatest importance to the State of New Hampshire.

One resource that has helped DES prioritize its efforts and collaborate with others to address these issues has been our involvement in the *Legislative Commission to Study the Relationship between Public Health and the Environment* over the past five years. Through the *Commission*, DES has been able to participate in a forum where important environmental issues that affect public health in the state are recognized, discussed, and prioritized by *Commission* members including legislators, representatives of state agencies, and members of the public. Further, *Commission* members then work collaboratively to identify and act to implement reasonable solutions to these problems.

DES views the Council that will be formed by enactment of HB 1265 as a continuation of the collaborative work of the *Commission*, and we strongly support its creation. DES is committed to a safe and healthy environment for all New Hampshire citizens. By identifying environmental health areas where our citizens may be vulnerable, and recommending common-sense action to address these concerns, such a council can significantly assist state and local public health and environmental agencies in prioritizing future efforts that have the greatest health benefit for our citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our support for HB 1265. Please call me at 271-3503 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Nolin
Commissioner

cc: House Environment and Agriculture Committee Members
Rep. Barbara French
Rep. James Pilliod
Sen. Joseph Foster
Sen. André Martel
Sen. Martha Fuller Clark